

7. TRUCK ROUTE RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider some of the most important concerns about truck traffic in the District: noise and vibration complaints from residents; security concerns around high-risk facilities; congestion; and the need for better information and services for truck operators and their customers. The creation of designated truck routes in the District can address these concerns simultaneously, albeit to varying degrees. This section makes recommendations about how to design a truck route network. A summary of the important traffic issues is presented below, followed by recommendations for a designated truck route system for the District.

7.1 SUMMARY OF EXISTING TRUCK TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

Trucks constitute approximately 5 percent of the traffic in the District; however, truck traffic is not distributed uniformly throughout. For example, on Georgia Avenue about 14 percent of traffic is trucks. Most truck traffic is destined for locations within the District (rather than passing through the District) and consists primarily of 2-axle, 4- and 6-tire vehicles, with a small percentage of larger and combination-type trucks on the major truck corridors.

Based on an analysis of data related to truck traffic and restrictions in the District and on interviews with various stakeholders, several important issues arise:

- The District does not have designated or recommended truck routes.
- There are several roads that have restrictions on one side of the District border with Maryland or Virginia that are not consistent with truck restrictions on the other side of the border.
- Neighborhood residents object to truck traffic cutting through residential streets.
- Double-parked vehicles cause traffic tie-ups on many arterials, especially in Georgetown, Downtown, and the Golden Triangle.
- Trucks pose potential security risks because of their ability to carry large amounts of hazardous materials, both as a necessary part of conducting business in such facilities as the U.S. Mint, and by terrorists.

To better manage truck travel, improve mobility, and enhance the level of safety and security, the District government can implement a series of preferred truck routes; a zone in the heavily congested and security-sensitive downtown area, from which large trucks would be prohibited during the business day; and truck prohibitions on all other roads unless travel on the street is necessary for the truck to reach its destination. There would be a streamlined permitting process through which truck operators could receive permission to travel on otherwise restricted or prohibited roadways. Figure 23 shows the recommended preferred truck routes and restricted zone.

The preferred, restricted, and prohibited routes presented here would encourage trucks to use major arterials for traversing the District, thereby largely eliminating them from side streets and other roadways with inadequate geometry or pavement quality for large trucks. This would be beneficial to both truckers and residents. Truck operators would get reliable

truck routes with roadway geometry and pavement condition adequate to accommodate large trucks. The ease in maneuverability on these larger roads could result in fewer trucks crashes. At the same time, residential neighborhoods would be isolated from large truck traffic. The creation of the restricted zone would permit smoother traffic movement in the major business district by eliminating large trucks from this area during the business day, thus alleviating congestion.

7.2 PREFERRED TRUCK ROUTES

The preferred truck routes are the corridors essential to freight movement in the District and currently carry the bulk of truck traffic. Furthermore, they have design characteristics that make them conducive to the movement of large trucks, thus encouraging trucks to use them and avoiding cut-throughs on residential streets.

The following is a list of preferred truck routes, which are mapped in Figure 23.

- Anacostia Freeway (US 295, all)
- Benning Road from East Capitol Street to Florida Avenue
- Bladensburg Road (all)
- Branch Avenue SE from the District border to Pennsylvania Avenue SE
- Brentwood Road (all)
- Canal Road NW from Macarthur Boulevard to M Street NW
- Connecticut Avenue from District border to Massachusetts Avenue
- Dalecarlia Parkway from Loughboro Road to Massachusetts Avenue NW
- East Capitol Street from Benning Road to the District border
- Florida Avenue from Bladensburg Road to U Street
- Florida Avenue NW from Massachusetts Avenue NW to Vernon Street NW
- Georgia Avenue (all)
- H Street NW/NE from Massachusetts Avenue to Benning Road
- Interstate 395 (all)
- Interstate 295 (all)
- K Street NW/NE from Mount Vernon Place to Florida Avenue NE
- Kenilworth Avenue NE (all)
- Loughboro Road from Macarthur Boulevard to Dalecarlia Parkway
- M Street NW from US 29 (Francis Scott Key Bridge) to Pennsylvania Avenue NW
- M Street NW from North Capitol Street east to New York Avenue NW
- Macarthur Boulevard from Loughboro Road to Canal Road NW
- Massachusetts Avenue from District border to 3rd Street NE
- Military Road from Nebraska Avenue NW to Missouri Avenue NW
- Missouri Avenue NW from Military Road to Riggs Road NE
- Nebraska Avenue NW from Massachusetts Avenue to Military Road
- New Hampshire Avenue NE/NW from District border to Georgia Avenue
- New York Avenue NE/NW from District border to Massachusetts Avenue NW
- North Capitol Street from New Hampshire Avenue to Massachusetts Avenue
- Pennsylvania Ave SE from District border to 3rd Street SE

- Rhode Island Avenue (all)
- Riggs Road NE from Missouri Avenue to District border
- River Road NW from District border to Wisconsin Avenue NW
- South Capitol Street from the Southeast Freeway to Interstate 295
- South Dakota Avenue NE from Riggs Road to Bladensburg Road
- Southern Avenue SE from East Capitol Street to 63rd Street NE
- U Street NW from 9th Street NW to 18th St NW
- Wisconsin Avenue NW from District border to M Street NW
- 3rd Street NE/SE from the Southeast Freeway to Massachusetts Avenue
- 7th Street from Massachusetts Avenue NW to Rhode Island Avenue NW
- 9th Street NW from I-395 to Rhode Island Avenue NW
- 12th Street NW from Independence Avenue SW to Massachusetts Avenue NW
- 14th Street NW from Maine Avenue SW to U Street NW
- 16th Street NW from Massachusetts Avenue to District border
- 23rd Street NW from M Street NW to Massachusetts Avenue NW
- 63rd Street NE from Southern Avenue to District border

The above roadways offer linkages to the Beltway and provide for good connectivity throughout the District. Further, they constitute a major part of the de facto truck routes used by truck drivers. The recommendation of Military Road as a preferred truck route is sure to be controversial since it is a residential street. Residents voiced concerns about safety (due in large part to trucks exceeding the speed limit), noise, vibrations, and air pollution on this road. However, it is the only east-west arterial in the northern part of the District and is therefore important for truck movement in the city. Some of the residents' concerns can be ameliorated by better enforcement of traffic laws, especially speeding and weight restrictions.

7.3 RESTRICTED ZONE

To address concerns about congestion and security, this report recommends the implementation of a restricted zone in the downtown area. This zone, which is shaded in yellow in Figure 23, would have the following regulations:

- It is bounded by:
 - 23rd Street NE/NW from Ohio Drive SW to Massachusetts Avenue NW
 - Massachusetts Avenue NW from 23rd Street NW to 3rd Street NE
 - 3rd Street NE/SE from Massachusetts Avenue NW to the Southeast Freeway
 - The Southeast Freeway from 3rd Street SE to Interstate 395
 - Interstate 395 from the Southeast Freeway to the Potomac River
- Trucks with 2 axles, 6 tires and smaller would be permitted at all times on the preferred truck routes located within the zone (9th, 12th, and 14th Streets).
- Trucks with more than 2 axles or 6 tires would be prohibited from the zone from 7 AM to 6 PM Monday through Friday.
- Trucks with more than 2 axles and 6 tires would be permitted from 6 PM to 7 AM Monday through Friday and 6 PM Friday to 7 AM Monday.

- All trucks would be required to use the preferred truck routes unless deviation from the routes is necessary to reach the vehicle's final destination.
- Interstate 395 would be exempt from the above restrictions, permitting all trucks at all times (except those otherwise restricted by the height and hazardous cargo restrictions for the 3rd Street Tunnel).
- There would be a streamlined permitting process that would allow large trucks to travel within the restricted zone outside of the above rules.
- Existing Federal restrictions around the Capitol would remain in place.

At present most large trucks operating in this area during the daytime hours are food and beverage deliveries, trash haulers, construction trucks, office movers, and gasoline trucks. As part of the implementation of these recommendations, DDOT will have to work with truck operators and their customers to find a solution that is suitable for all stakeholders. It might be possible to shift some of these trips to nighttime hours. Alternatively, it may be possible for operators to make the same deliveries with smaller vehicles, which are allowed in the restricted zone during the workday. If necessary, operators can receive short-term or long-term permits to operate large trucks within the restricted zone during the workday.

7.4 OTHER ROADWAYS

Trucks of all sizes would be prohibited from using streets that are not designated preferred truck routes unless travel on the street is necessary for the vehicle to reach its final destination. Emergency vehicles would, of course, be exempt from truck route restrictions. Construction vehicles, which may have to travel off the preferred truck routes over an extended period of time, would be issued a permit exempting them from the truck route regulations and allowing them to travel to and from the construction site using routes approved during the permitting process. Other vehicles and operators may require similar special exemptions, such as trash trucks using the Fort Totten transfer station. These situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Trucks owned or operated by the District government will be required to comply with all truck route regulations, and will be able to obtain permits for exemptions when necessary.

7.5 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Enforcement

The implementation of truck routes will decrease truck-related problems only if truck operators obey the routes and restrictions. Clear, consistent signing of truck routes and restrictions is one way to encourage trucks to stay on designated routes. However, DDOT must also work closely with the MPD to enforce the new restrictions. Over time, DDOT and MPD must continue to coordinate enforcement activities on streets that are known to have a large number of truck restriction violations.

Truck Restrictions by Size Rather than Weight

While truck restrictions are usually mandated based on vehicle weight, this truck route scheme restricts based on vehicle size. This is because:

- Restrictions based on vehicle size (which is easily observed) are easier to enforce than restrictions based on vehicle weight, which must be measured.

- Currently, there is not enough weight information available on trucks traveling within the District to make informed choices about how to restrict truck traffic based on vehicle weight.
- The truck-related problems in the District are generally not a function of truck weight. Rather, they are about truck *movement*: where trucks travel and where they stop for loading/unloading.

As more information on weights of trucks operating in the District becomes available and as weigh-in-motion facilities are constructed for the District, a weight restriction may be considered for the truck routes.

Induced Small Truck Travel

With trucks larger than 2-axle, 6-tire vehicles prohibited from the restricted zone during the business day, truck operators might substitute several trips with smaller vehicles for a single trip now made with a larger vehicle. This could result in an increase in the total number of truck trips within the restricted zone. In the absence of more comprehensive traffic and vehicle classification counts, there is no appropriate way to predict the number of new small-truck-trips that would be generated by the restrictions. This issue may have to be addressed in the future when better data is available.